

This correction is made by 2/2/51

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NSC BRIEFING

Ref to [] by 1400.

9 September 1958

TAIWAN STRAITS

I. Military action in the Taiwan Straits has centered around Chinese Nationalist efforts to break the successful Communist interdiction of the supply lines to Kinmens.

A. Although last Thursday Peiping had announced it would enforce a twelve-mile limit to its coastal waters, it did not attack the first Nationalist convoy, which was escorted to the three-mile line by US warships on last Sunday.

1. Poor beach organization, however, prevented full unloading of the two Nationalist LSMS.

B. On Monday, the Chinese Communist artillery opened fire while a second convoy was unloading, []

a heavy ILLEGIB

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1. One of two LSMS was destroyed and the other withdrew without unloading.

C. Peiping continues to issue "serious warnings" against US movements across the twelve-mile line, but has not attacked US vessels.

1. The Communists have, however, declared their intention to strike at "Chiang ships under the protection of US warships."

II. A few hours before the second ^{*attempted to*}convoy landed its supplies last Monday there occurred an air clash between 12 Nationalist F-86s and 12 Communist MIGs.

- A. The F-86s were escorting a reconnaissance flight over a Communist airfield in the Swatow area and had no relation to the convoy operation. *5 MiGs were destroyed, one damaged and without the knowledge.*
1. This operation was undertaken against the advice of Admiral Smoot.

B. However, the Nationalists have now agreed to inform United States authorities before initiating similar operations in the future.

C. Nevertheless, the fact that this incident could occur and also the fact that a convoy sailed to resupply the Matsus without our knowledge is disquieting. They demonstrate that the Nationalists have the capability to take action without our advance knowledge.

III. Thus there is a danger that the Chinese Nationalists will initiate air action against the Communists designed to provoke ~~all-out~~ hostilities between the United States and Communist China.

A. The Nationalists are reported "dismayed" over the prospect of negotiations between the United States and Communist China.

1. ~~Many of them hope that a showdown fight will develop over the offshore islands situation which would eventually enable them to achieve their ambition of recovery of the China mainland.~~

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IV. Meanwhile Chou En-lai made Peiping's official answer to the Eisenhower-Dulles statement last Saturday. Chou reaffirmed Peiping's "absolute right" to take the "necessary military actions" against Chinese Nationalist forces on the offshore islands.

~~A. Evidently confident that the Communist negotiating position has been strengthened, Chou stated that "Peiping is ready to resume ambassadorial talks."~~

~~B. Mao Tse-Tung two days later made a firmer commitment to resume the talks, stating that discussions "would begin in Warsaw."~~

A ~~or~~ Peiping may now seek to negotiate the withdrawal of Nationalist troops from the offshore islands and not force the Taiwan issue.

V. ^{Public} ~~These~~ statements ^{by} ~~of~~ Chou and Mao ^{concerning ambassadorial talks,} are drastically-underplayed in the Communist press, suggesting that the Chinese leaders intend to sustain the atmosphere of crisis throughout China.

A. At the biggest rally ever held in Peiping, politburo member Peng Chen on 7 September reaffirmed Peiping's "determination" to take Taiwan and the offshore islands.

VI. Khrushchev's letter of last Sunday to President Eisenhower represents the strongest ^{to date} statement of Soviet support ~~to date~~ to Communist China in the Taiwan Strait crisis.

Question: is "drastically" (V) correct?

VII. Khrushchev did not specify the conditions under which the Soviet commitment would go into effect or the form which such support would assume.

A. ~~Pravda on 31 August had promised Peiping the "necessary moral and material help."~~

A. ^{But} The language of Khrushchev's ^{letter was blunt,} blunt warning, goes further, ~~however,~~ ^{It} and appears to pledge the Soviet Union to assist Communist China with direct Soviet military support. ^{without being specific}

B. ~~Thus~~ Moscow has officially served notice to the US and world opinion that the ~~Communist~~ ^{to back Communist China in a showdown with} bloc is fully prepared for a major test of strength with the United States. ^{the US over the offshore islands,}

VIII. The immediate purpose of Khrushchev's pronouncement is to inhibit further US support of Nationalist China.

A. We believe, however, that the major objectives of Sino-Soviet military and diplomatic pressures ^{are:} ~~is~~ ¹ to secure a greater voice for Peiping in world affairs and acceptance by other states of Communist China as a

2. To reduce US and Chinese Nationalist prestige.

B. Khrushchev's ^{in his} denunciation of US policy toward China, ~~contending~~ ^{that} US policy can no longer be regarded as an internal affair because it now involves the interests of many countries. ^{Thus his denunciation} ~~foreshadows~~ the Soviet line of attack

in the UN General Assembly session on 16 September
at which an all-out effort to settle the question of
Chinese representation appears in the making.

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